



NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2011

FLOODING

Natural Disaster Zone in Northern NSW

- On Tuesday 29th November the Minister for Police & Emergency Services, Michael Gallacher declared the Moree Plains Shire Council, Armidale Dumaresq and Inverell Shire as Natural Disaster areas following heaving rain and flooding.
- Since then Gunnedah, Gwydir, Liverpool Plains, Muswellbrook, Narrabri, Tamworth and Upper Hunter Shires have also been declared Natural Disaster Zones.
- NSW Farmers is currently working with Industry & Investment and other organizations to ensure that appropriate resources are available to support farmers in affected areas.
- NSW Farmers is aware of the emotional and psychological pressure on farmers as a result of flooding and potential crop/stock loss so we encourage people to seek help where needed.
- Emergency Contacts
 - Life threatening emergency: 000
 - SES for general help in a flood or storm: 132 500
 - Road closures – Major highways and state roads: 131 700, Local road closures: contact the local council
 - Mental Health contacts: 1800 201 123 (Rural Mental Health Support Line)

POLICY WIN

Youth Allowance

Students from inner regional areas will be able to access independent Youth Allowance under exactly the same rules that apply to students from Outer Regional, Remote and Very Remote areas. The changes are part of a \$265 million Federal Government package. The announcement meets the Government's commitment, made in February this year, to eliminate regional eligibility distinctions for Youth Allowance with effect from 1 January 2012. Eligible regional students will also have access to the increased value of the Relocation Scholarships from 1 January. The Relocation scholarship was introduced in 2010 after the Government recognised that students from regional areas also experience higher costs in relocating for the purposes of study. Previously, eligible students received \$4,124 for their first year of study and then \$1,031 for each subsequent year of study, subject to CPI. From 1 January 2012 students will receive \$4000 for the first year of study, \$2000 for the second and third year of study followed by \$1,000 for any subsequent years. The Government will introduce the legislation next week and then take effect from 1 January 2012.

POLICY ISSUES

Murray Darling Basin Plan

NSW Farmers has received a detailed briefing on the draft Murray-Darling Basin Plan and it does not meet our key expectations. Our expectations were:

1. That the report contains evidence of a triple bottom line approach to the social, economic and environmental impacts of the Plan.
2. That the MDBA identify the outcomes they're seeking - and ways to achieve them; rather than suggesting a rigid number as the silver bullet to solve all the perceived problems in the Basin.
3. That the MDBA to look into whether alternative management options would reduce the amount of water needed for the Lower Lakes at the mouth of the Murray in South Australia, and hence the required cuts in other parts of the country.
4. And that the Draft contains a detailed plan for environmental watering that minimises the risks of private land being flooded.

Our information indicates the Draft Plan will not meet these expectations, and as a result NSW Farmers cannot support the Plan. NSW Farmers will fight to make sure this Plan does not destroy the livelihoods of our farmers and their communities.

Coal Seam Gas

NSW Farmers has applauded the Coalition Government's move to pause all drilling activity, including water bore monitoring and a gas pilot well at the Georges Island site on the Liverpool Plains until the results of the Namoi Catchment Water Study are released. The Association's Mining Update is due to be released very soon.

Diuron Review

NSW Farmers provided a submission to the APVMA review of Diuron on Friday 30th September. NSW Farmers supports the safe use of chemicals but sound evidence-based science must underpin the assessment of risk associated with any specific chemical use. NSW Farmers does not believe a scientific assessment of risk would warrant a blanket ban on the use of Diuron products nationally. NSW Farmers asks the APVMA to consider factors including farming system, spray technology, climate, topography and actual use patterns in their risk assessment of Diuron. These factors are highly variable within Australia. Therefore while some uses of Diuron in Australia will most likely require suspension, users of Diuron in low risk regions should not be penalised by a national suspension of Diuron products.

Social Media

We now have a Facebook page for the Central North region, search 'NSW Farmers: Central North' you can also search 'NSW Farmers' Association' and 'like' us. To follow us on twitter search: @NSWFarmers and 'follow' us.

Tertiary Scholarships

The 2012 application process has begun! Applications opened last month and will close on Friday 10th February 2012. There are 8 scholarships up for grabs with each totalling \$5000. The process is as follows:

1. Applicant must go to the tertiary scholarship website http://www.nswfarmers.org.au/benefits_services/tertiary_scholarships/ then click on the 'click here to apply link' at the top and bottom of the page
2. The applicant must then fill out the form online and once all fields are completed they must print that out
3. Then with this printed off form, the applicant must add to it a copy of their previous years tertiary academic record and two written reports from referees addressing the following areas:
 - a. Commitment to agriculture/rural communities
 - b. Leadership qualities and communication skills
 - c. Tertiary academic standards
4. The applicant must then fax or post all documents to the Association

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Region 4 will be hosting a Forum where President Fiona Simson, CEO Matt Brand and a strong line up of guest speakers will be attending on the 15th of March 2012

MEMBER BENEFITS

Don't forget to consider our 5 major Business Partners when carrying out your business: Mitsubishi, NAB, WFI, Prime Super and Essential Energy.

Mitsubishi

Order a Triton, Challenger or Pajero from the 1/11/2011 to 31/12/2011 and have it delivered in this time to receive National Fleet pricing + \$1200 off. Proof of membership will be required. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me or your local Mitsubishi dealer. We have a dealer in Moree and Dubbo in this region.

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